

A Tribute to Court Leadership and Community Support



Judge Stowe was the special guest at the Probate and Family Court Staff Holiday luncheon. Judge Stanton presented Judge Stowe with his portrait that is now hung on the 2nd floor of the Hall of Justice. If you are in the court house, stop and see it!

Before the presentation, Judge Stanton read a beautiful poem, written by Barb Donaldson, Chief Probation Officer, as a gift for Judge Stowe from the Probate and Family Court Staff for all the wonderful work he did for our court and the community.

Also during the staff luncheon....

Volunteer Services presented Judge Stanton with Beanie Babies, trucks, cars, books, and stuffed animals that were collected from volunteers:

Dorothy Grant, Lee Storch, Denyse Everett and Barb Grewe. Staff: Sue Adkins and her husband, Thomas Adkins, and the community.

These will refill the Beanie Baby room that is located off of Judge Stanton's court room. Children are able to choose an item from the room when they are involved in court proceedings.

Thank you to everyone for your kindness in donating to a wonderful cause!





Happy Birthday

January

Agnes Barrett
Kathleen Packer
Florence Morrison
Holli Ringgenberg
Al Wilkins
Caroline Hirth
Katy Ramsdell
Dan Briggs
Henry Tenbrink
Mary Myers
Maswe Hennrick
Helen Knapp
Joann Carlson
Dorothy Grant
Caron Alpers
Renee Stout
Pat Wazny
Sandra Dwyer
Josh Sullivan
Ruth Epting

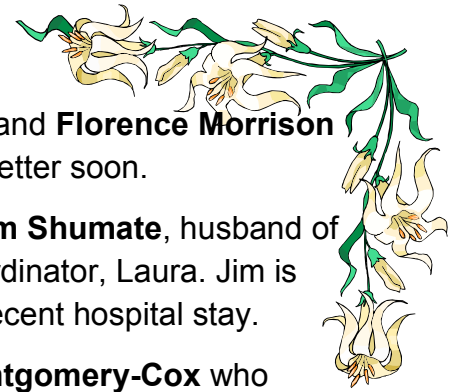
February

Cathy Boissoneau
Nancy Ferrar
Elizabeth Leden
Nancy Fraser
Val Doman
Kay Velker
Donna Thoma
Lynn Troutman
John Roeser
Sophia Delonghi
Tanya Prince-Stolz
Laura McVey
Marie Hanis
Joan Wigton
Suzetta Summers
Beth Rideout
Lynn Bryant
Sue Green
Matt Dohm
Ann Geht

We are thinking of **Elliott and Florence Morrison** and hope they're feeling better soon.

We are also thinking of **Jim Shumate**, husband of our Learning Partner Coordinator, Laura. Jim is home recovering from a recent hospital stay.

We remember **Verna Montgomery-Cox** who passed away this month. Verna was an artist and she combined that interest with her love for kids by supervising community service workers in making patchwork quilts. She was always impressed with how well "her boys" could sew. Verna was a faithful volunteer, who was happy to share her talents with us.



Survey results for Volunteer Services



Of the volunteers who completed our survey, we are pleased to see that you are all satisfied with the work we do here in Volunteer Services. Responses from a few of you included;

"This work reminds me of the good people in the world! I especially appreciate the volunteer staff who work so hard to look out for us and help us to know what to do in difficult situations."

"I feel that my volunteer work is a worthwhile endeavor, it broadens my horizons and introduces me to a lot of new people, ideas and experiences that I might not otherwise have access to."

We would like to thank you all for the work you do and the time you commit to all of our programs. Also, thank you for taking the time to complete our survey, allowing us to know how we can better serve you.



Thank you to the following volunteers who were able to assist the Hall of Justice in conducting the SCAO (State Court Administrators Office) Survey.

Probate and Family court volunteers asked 120 people to fill out the survey, 83 did so. Of those 83 people almost all were satisfied with the job our court is doing and the biggest complaint, was lack of parking.

Katy Ramsdell, Cynthia Johnson, Diana Zapalski, Don Hutchinson, Cheryl Bzdok, Barb Grewe, Parker Field, Nancy Reddy and Mary Ann Wichtner

Learning



Partners



Learning Partners were invited to attend Interlochen Arts Academy's performance of "The Nutcracker" ballet in December. Learning Partner Students and their Volunteers enjoyed an evening of graceful dancing and beautiful costumes as well as, a magnificent orchestra of high school students.

As one Volunteer said, "I know this will be the VERY BEST EXPERIENCE THIS LITTLE GIRL HAS EVER HAD IN HER LIFE, up to this point in time!!" "She is so excited and thrilled about it.....we've been reading the book of the "story" of the Nutcracker so she will be kind of familiar with the dancer/costumes."



Learning Partner Students, their families and their Learning Partner Volunteers will all be ice skating on January 20th. This has become a very popular event for students and their families, with dozens attending each year that it is offered. All will have the opportunity to learn to skate, improve their skating and enjoy the activity together.



Judge Melanie Stanton will join CASA volunteers at their monthly in-service meeting, Tuesday, **January 21st** at 4 p.m. She will discuss the impact of CASA involvement in neglect and abuse cases in Grand Traverse County. There will also be time for current case study and discussion.

February 18th meeting agenda will be announced.

2014 CASA training dates have been scheduled as follows:

Mon 3/3 Volunteer Manual-Linda Fawcett

Mon 3/10 Introducing the Law-Mike Long, Atty.

Mon 3/17 Cultural Awareness-TBD

Mon 3/24 Understanding Families-Carolyn Bearinger, WRC

Mon 4/7 Understanding Families-Shelley Burnes-ATS

Thr 4/10 Understanding Children-Jill Kimball, Lakeview Counseling

Mon 4/14 Working with DHS-Megan Heethuis, DHS

Thr 4/17 Communication-Barb Cross, Maple Clinic

Mon 4/21 Reporting & Monitoring-Amanda Steele, PAO and Nina Merten, Atty.

Thr 4/24 Gathering Info-Linda Fawcett

This 30+ hour national curriculum focuses on understanding the law, understanding families, the effects of substance abuse and domestic violence on families and more.

Please join us. A pre-service application and interview are required.





2013 Volunteer Services ~ Program Stats



Family Court:

Truancy Intervention Program – Parent and Youth information classes have been developed and are now facilitated by volunteers to support the Truancy Intervention Program. During 2013, 5 classes were conducted by 15 volunteers with 24 students and 25 parents attending.

Transportation – 3 vehicles and 15 transporters supported 111 successful transports for 128 youth in 2013. We also purchased a very nice used Grand Marquis to replace the Grand Am.

New Vision Academy – A program which provides our juvenile offenders an opportunity for personal growth and development while keeping them busy and engaged during the summer. Summer 2013, 11 youth participated in the program and 35 volunteers, facilitated the classes.

Learning Partners – Learning Partners are caring adults matched as a tutor/mentor to a child, typically referred by their school as “at risk” of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system. 32 students matched with 23 volunteers benefited from one-on-one attention, as well as, group positive learning experiences.

CASA – 30 CASA volunteers worked on 43 cases for 92 children in foster care, advocating for their best interest with parents and agency workers, writing court reports and attending court hearings on their behalf.

Citizen’s Panel – This program diverts certain first-time offenders from the Court, offering an opportunity for community members to be involved in the process and allowing the youth to make amends for their offense to the community, through their promise. In 2013, 7 panels were held with 3 volunteers on each panel. 11 youth successfully completed their “promise” to the community.

S.H.O.C.K- Shop Lifting is a Crime Kids!-This collaborative program brings together Macy’s, GT County Sheriff’s Dept., TCAPS and Probate Court Volunteers for a video and presentation to 4th graders. In 2013, 15 elementary school sessions were conducted by 2 volunteers.

Probate Court:

Court Appointed Volunteer Guardians and Conservators- Currently 22 volunteers are assigned to 65 wards as guardians and conservators. Guardians and Conservators receive funds, pay bills, attend care conferences, make placement decisions; may monitor employment and seek out resources to help wards in maintaining a good quality of life.

Review of Guardianship for Minors & Adults- Michigan Law states that Probate Court may review a guardianship for a minor as it considers necessary and shall review a guardianship annually if the minor is under six years of age. 18 reviews for minors have been completed by 9 volunteers in 2013. Adult reviews have been conducted by volunteers since 1989. 69 adult reviews have been conducted by 20 volunteers in 2013.

Special Thank You– We would like to thank all the volunteers who assisted with various projects throughout the year; newsletter, mailings, office assistance, and call lists to name a few. Your service and assistance is greatly appreciated!



GRAND TRAVERSE AREA LITERACY COUNCIL



Well, winter is upon us and the holiday spirit is still strong.

GTALC's spirit is strong as well. This fall's tutor training saw 7 new tutors complete their training. They are being matched or assigned as I type this. Tutors have choices of English as a Second Language (ESL) students, Adult Basic Education (ABE) students, or assignments in the Learning Partner program of Probate and Family Court or with students at Michigan Works.

GTALC continues to participate in the Traverse City Children's Book Fair which was the largest to date. GTALC along with Read Aloud are beneficiaries in the event. The festival celebrates learning and the love of reading.

GTALC also continues to provide tutors to Michigan Works! Traverse City office and with a still recovering economy Michigan Works! Offices are busy serving adults who are acquiring new job skills in anticipation of employment.

January sees the start of the collaborative program between GTALC and the Probate and Family Court. Stemming from the interest of Judge Melanie Stanton, this program addresses parents whose reading skills are weak. The tie between parents who read and in turn read to their children is critical to breaking the cycle of low reading skills, unemployment or underemployment, and poverty.

On the topic of low reading skills, a member of GTALC's board, Mary DeGrazia, has produced a guide to the identification of an individual who struggles to read. Visit our web site to see it. www.gtalc.org

Respectfully submitted,

Dick Thompson, President



Frostbite Food Drive &
Donation Match Challenge
February 7th-16th



20th Annual Downtown Chili
Cook-Off
Park Place Hotel
Saturday, Jan. 11th, 2014
11:00-3:00 p.m.



**VOLUNTEERS IN
PREVENTION/PROBATION**

GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY PROBATE COURT

GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY PROBATE AND FAMILY COURT

MELANIE D. STANTON, PROBATE & FAMILY COURT JUDGE

280 Washington St., Suite B 150, Traverse City, MI 49684

231-922-4827



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Or Current Resident

*All meeting are held at the Volunteer Services office
unless otherwise mentioned.

Learning Partners

1st Tuesday-4:00-5:00 pm

Tuesday, Jan. 7th, 2014

Tuesday, Feb. 4th, 2014



CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate)

3rd Tuesday- 4:00-6:00 pm

Tuesday, Jan. 21st, 2014

Tuesday, Feb. 18th, 2014



Literacy Council

3rd Wednesday-6:00 pm
Traverse Area District Library

Wednesday, Jan. 22nd, 2014

Wednesday, Feb. 19th, 2014



Attention Volunteer Guardians:

**A training opportunity is being
planned. Stay tuned for dates
and times.**